Love to Share

OTHERS WILL NOT CARE HOW MUCH WE KNOW
UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH WE CARE.

Sharing and Caring Hands

Volume 8 No. 1 SPRING 1993

FROM MY HEART

Children! Children! What will become of our children! Hardly a day goes by when we do not hear about the harsh realities of life on children, especially those living in poverty. Whether it is the child committing a crime against someone, or someone committing a crime against a child, the agony and the questions are the same. Why? How could this happen? What is our world coming to? Unfortunately, the tragedy is even broader than what we see on the nighttime news. One-fourth of this nation's kids live in poverty. In the Inner City, (40% in Minneapolis), it is even higher. These kids do not have the adequate tools to build a productive life. Their nutrition is bad; their housing is inadequate or nonexistent; the neighborhoods are in decay; crime and drugs run rampant in their community. They have few role models for success and too many for failure. The schools have a tough time teaching because many of the kids do not come to school emotionally or physically ready to learn. Families are torn apart or never existed. I see the effects every day and have been asked many times, "What can we do to change the situation?"

While many people will talk about what the Government needs to do, such as more housing, crime control, rebuilding of the community, health care and a myriad of other things, which are all needed, I prefer to talk about what we, the concerned people of the country, can do — Churches, civic organizations, businesses, even individuals, need to provide vehicles where concerned people can reach out to the poor and the hurting of our society. This has been done when suburban churches team with inner city churches to provide the volunteers and resources to make programs such as child care, tutoring and mentor programs possible. It is done with programs such as Foster Grandparents, Big Brothers and Boys and Girls Clubs. It is done when businesses reach out and revitalize their community — renovating housing and businesses that make up that section of town — when they support organizations such as Habitat for Humanity — all of these efforts make a difference.

Sharing and Caring Hands tries to address the needs of these children by providing nutritious meals every day, and providing clothing and shoes for children in need. Many schools contact us and say that some children cannot come to school until they have the proper clothes and jackets that they need. We provide glasses for kids in need, requested by both families and schools. We have Storytime and Arts and Crafts Classes for the children who come to Sharing and Caring Hands. We provide dental care and food from our Emergency Food Shelf. In the last year, we have found housing for scores of families and hundreds of children.

One of the most important things Sharing and Caring Hands does for children is to be a beacon of hope, showing that we care and that we will be there in their need. We at Sharing and Caring Hands become role models. We offer them a few dollars if they bring in a good Report Card, and we praise them for their efforts. We have helped send some of them to camp and many on field trips that they could not afford. We constantly try to reaffirm their worth.

We must all reach out to the poor and the hurting of this world, especially the children who will become our future. We and our children will have to live in the world that we provide — we must reach out and make a difference by influencing our Government leaders, our Churches, our businesses, our civic organizations, and each other, to get involved in changing the negative circumstances in which too many of our children are growing up.

Sharing and Caring Hands is committed to make a difference in the lives of children and their families. Maybe you could help us help others.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Copeland
Founder and Director of
Sharing and Caring Hands

HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS — UPDATE

On December 31st of 1992, the City Council refused our request for a zoning change that was necessary to build a transitional shelter on the land that we own adjacent to our property. However, all of the news that we received last year was not bad. As it turned out, we are able to build apartment units, that have their own kitchens and bathrooms, under our current zoning and the project would not be subject to a "Conditional Use Permit". As we reviewed our options, building the apartment units seemed like a trade-off with some merit. One of our main concerns was homeless families, and the apartment units would be much more cohesive to the family unit that was already under so much stress. Also, having individual units with their own kitchens and bathroom facilities, reduced the need for staff, help and support supervision. We felt these units could be designed with the security and control that was needed for the project kept intact.

We asked the architect to design an Apartment Project for the homeless that would provide a comfortable, safe and controlled environment for the people who were in need of immediate housing until they were able to come up with something more suitable to their needs. The architect designed a two winged apartment that, for security, had a common entrance to a fenced yard. One wing would house 24 family units, with 2 bedrooms, a family room, kitchen and a bath, that would have room for 2 adults and 6 children. The other wing of the apartment complex would have 32 efficiency apartments that could house 1 or 2 people each. The main floor would have laundry facilities, kids play area, apartment lounge, offices, meeting rooms, storage and a general lobby. The apartment units have a maximum capacity of 256 people, but will probably hold less because not every family has 6 children and a husband and wife, and also, not every Efficiency apartment will have 2 people. We believe the total project cost of $6 million dollars will not be changed.

SHELTER FUNDRAISING — UPDATE

To this date, we have paid $550,000 on the price of the land; we have $750,000 in pledges for the building. Building supplies and labor have been pledged by the members of the Construction Specification Institute, and others. A partial list includes: Windows, concrete block, precast concrete floor, roofing, millwork, paint and many professional services, the value of which is well over $1,700,000. This puts us at about the halfway mark in our effort. We have $3 million more dollars to raise.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Our Annual Christmas Eve Party and Gift Giveaway was a big success. We fed over 15,000 people, and gave away over 25,000 gifts. Although, through your generosity, we had many items to give away, including sweatshirts, socks, gloves, flannel shirts, scarves, sports equipment, teenage gifts, and lots of toys — as we got close to Christmas, we were running a little short — but then the Marines landed with toys from their Toys for Tots campaign that was sponsored by KARE 11 TV. The day was bitterly cold, so we rented buses so that the people waiting in line could stay warm. It also was great for controlling the crowd. Music was provided by a group from Epithany and also by Bob Gacek with his accordion. Santa Claus was everywhere, handing out goodies, and the volunteers were also there by the hundred — arriving and leaving all day long. We went from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. What a long day — but it was worth it to see all of those happy faces. I would like to say thanks from the bottom of my heart to all of the hundreds of people who made this Christmas Eve Party such a big success.

Help Us
Help Others!

FROM THE LETTER BAG

"Dear Mary Jo,

My name is Rebecca Countryman. I'd like to thank you so very much for helping my family out during our time of need. My mom was so worried about having a safe, warm place for myself and my little brother Eric to stay. My mom tells me not to worry, that things will always work out, but how can I not worry when I see her crying. She does as much as she can to help others, but when she asks for help they turned us away. My mom had nowhere else to turn so we came to you. You opened your arms and your heart to us. I have so much more to say to you but I don't know how to say it and thank you seems so little.

Love, Rebecca & Eric Countryman"

"Dear Caring & Sharing Staff,

My situation was to me more like a deep pit. Going through a divorce I lost my financial support and to my dismay, the "Agencies" were overloaded and too busy and to impersonal. Your group was a light. Thank you from me and my kids for the beds, the blankets, and today our trash was picked up. My oldest girl got new panties from Target. Thank you. My little boy said after he got the mattress set up in his room and I put on the beautiful sheet and sat on it, Mom, I feel happy. Gee I guess I was getting used to sleeping on the floor. We are so grateful. You really touched us. Thanks.

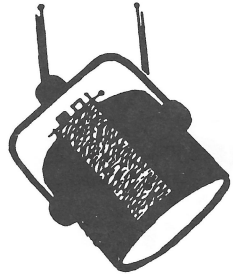
Sincerely, Diane"

"Mary Jo and Staff of Sharing & Caring Hands,

Thank you so much for caring about people who are less fortunate than others and all of the kindness you do, all the thanks doesn't seem enough. I'm a single mom of 6. My baby's father died in January and he didn't see our daughter born in June. My son just gets out of the hospital in December. He is handicapped but doing great. I go to school full time this quarter. I have 17 credits, full schedule, trying to get my AA degree to transfer my BA degree in Social Work. The money and toys were very little until I received your help. God bless you all.

Someone who appreciates you more than you know."

"A Generous Heart Prospers"



SPOTLIGHTING — "CHRISTMAS BILL"

I think that it is only fitting that the volunteer we spotlight today is a man who volunteers every year at Christmas for about 4 weeks to get everything set up and organized. We have taken to calling him "Christmas Bill", but his real name is Bill Osborne; in fact, we might have to figure out a new nickname for him as he has decided to stay around and give us some much needed help. Thanks a lot, Bill — your help has been great and your commitment unyielding.

DENTAL CLINIC

The Dental Clinic is doing a great job, but we could still use some more volunteer dentists to fill out all of the available time. If you are interested in a day a week, or a day a month, please contact Mary Jo at 338-4640.

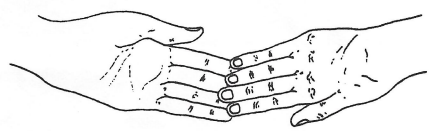
DONATIONS

We appreciate your donations and we cannot get along without them. Our special needs are in housekeeping items such as towels, washcloths, sheets, pillows, dishes, pots, pans, silverware, glasses, and other miscellaneous household items.

VOLUNTEERS

We are always in need of people to volunteer to sort clothing. Bring a friend — make a day of it. See what's going on. Call Mary Jo or Skip to set up a time.

Sharing & Caring Hands
425 North 7th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55405
612-338-4640
Business Hours:
M - Th: 9:30am - 4:30pm
Sat. - Sun.: 9:00am - 1:00pm



Sharing and Caring Hands
c/o Mary Jo Copeland
P.O. Box 3182
Minneapolis, MN 55403

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 399
MINNEAPOLIS, MN

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED